

# Mystery and suspense

*Task: Write the account of a mysterious crime.*

## 1. *The Basic Ingredients*

Make notes on the following key elements:

- The crime itself
- The victim(s)
- The criminal
- The suspect(s)
- The clues

## 2. *Atmosphere*

Develop your ideas by thinking about the following questions:

- Where?  
Decide on the setting of the story - town/country; church/ barn; England/France?
- When?  
Past/present/ future?
- What?  
What happens in your story?
- Why?  
What kinds of feelings do you want your reader to experience when reading your story?

## 3. *The Plot*

Make a brief flow chart showing the stages of your plot:

eg. Finding the dead body of Mr. X  
➡ the hunt at the crime scene for the murder weapon ➡ strange noises heard at night ➡ the pigs escape ➡ another body is found ➡ Mrs. W is suspected and followed ➡ the policeman is chased by a strange figure ..

## 4. *Structure*

Now think carefully about the structure of your story.

- It must have a strong beginning, middle and end
- Each paragraph should deal with one theme or issue.

## 5. *Draft, check and write up!*

Now you are ready to begin your rough draft. Remember to make the story as strange and unexpected as possible, and keep your readers guessing. You might want to do this by a clever use of clues and suspects, so that the actual criminal goes unsuspected until the very end. You also need to supply lots of detailed description, using all five senses, to make your story believable.